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HEAVY METAL #262

DRAVN

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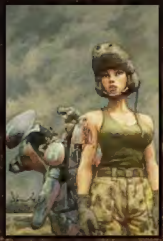

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006 DRAVN HISTORY

008 DRAVN GALLERY
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014 DRAVN 2001: GIRL OF SORROWS
Artists:
CAMILLA d'ERRICO
ASUKA 111

026 DRAVN 1918: Two Masters
Artist:
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040 DRAVN 1451: Brotherly Love
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DRAVN
darkness cannot drive out darkness

They are the Dravn
They are the darkness

From the Shadow Bridge they come
From the sea of the dead they come
Begat by the sons of God and the daughters of men

Their forms are shrouded in shadows
Their eyes burn with the flames of hell
They have been heralded as heroes and gods
They have been hunted as savages and demons

They come to bring judgement and terror
They come to bring balance and triumph
They come to hold together a world tearing apart

They have been kings
They have been slaves
They have been wanderers

But they have all been warriors
Such has been their burden
So it always will be
They are the Dravn

[redacted]

80

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

CLASSIFIED

IN REPLY REFER TO
AGPO-AD 201
057 (11 Oct [redacted]

11 October [redacted]

MEMORANDUM FOR: ASSISTANT SECRETARY [redacted]
OFFICE CHIEF OF STAFF, U. S. ARMY
ATTENTION: Colonel John R. Beishline

SUBJECT: CHANGE OF COMMAND DVN (DRAVN) OPS BRIEF

1. Winter 1915, "Schwarze Sonne" (Black Sun) operatives follow up on unexplained battlefield events. Those with [redacted] recruited. First "modern" DRAVN experiments. Jung's tests on "Subject 11" spawn [redacted] Synchronicity Theory. [redacted] leaks to allies in mid 1916. Race to catch up. Significant development in [redacted] between wars.

2. 1939 German Buildup: OSS and SOE jointly form DVN-Ops Div. Spring 1942, three (3) DVN circuits inserted into occupied France. Agent [redacted] sent to engage Gestapo operative [redacted] Unexplained events/technology at D-Day. [redacted] defects during Battle of New York Harbor. Raids at underground laboratories in Thuringia, Pilsen (Skota), Jonastal, Königsberg produce significant advancements.

3. 1954: Soviets suspected of using [redacted] DVN tech. Jack Whitfield Parsons, Hans Kammler, Hubertus Strughold make breakthrough in [redacted] Brain [redacted] Self experimentation leads to Parsons death in "lab accident."

4. Vietnam: Bien Hoa Hospital test yeild advances in [redacted] enhancement [redacted] "Tiger Force" incidents suspected to be the result of adverse effects of incorrectly applied DVN technology.

5. Fall of Berlin Wall opens new access to Soviet [redacted] testing. "Braskov Device" studied and tested at Wake Island, Sainte Anne Mental Institution (France) and SynOps Corporation.

6. "Rahn Hypothesis" (see ajacent archeological journal page). Greeted with some skepticism, but a study of [redacted] seems warranted.

3 Inclosures
1. Engraved DSM w/4th OLC
2. Citation
3. Certificate

EDWARD F. WITSELL
Major General, USA
The Adjutant General

18 OCT [redacted] ICS (ltr)
APPROVED-OFFICE CHIEF OF STAFF
(Presentation accomplished on 14 October [redacted])

Document# DVN8677436
Rahn Archaeological Journal
"Rahn Hypothesis"

Verdina dig site (Greece)
- inconsistent with all known water clocks
- spiral water screw suggests "alternate" use

Canteleu dig site (France)
- late medieval breast plate
- same "mechanism" as others
- microscopy indicates carbon nanotubes (remarkable for middle ages)

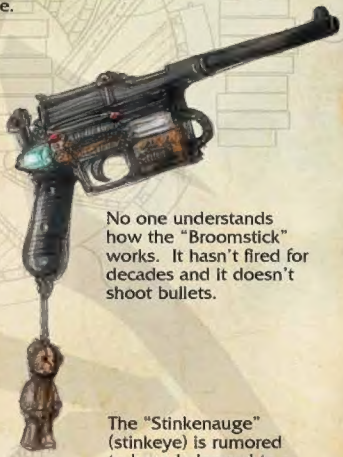
Nyiregyhaza dig site (Hungary)
- strap attachments suggest artifact worn on back
- strange cylindrical shape (what for decoration? why magnetic?)

No one on the dig team knows anything. I know. I know they exist, have existed throughout the ages. I know their time is coming again.

Fig. 1

BRIT

The DRAVN universe is a dark shadow of our own world gone awry. It can only be reset by a girl from a dying desert town trailer park who is tortured by visions of violence.



No one understands how the "Broomstick" works. It hasn't fired for decades and it doesn't shoot bullets.

Fig. 2

The "Stinkenauge" (stinkeye) is rumored to have belonged to a famed WWI aviator.

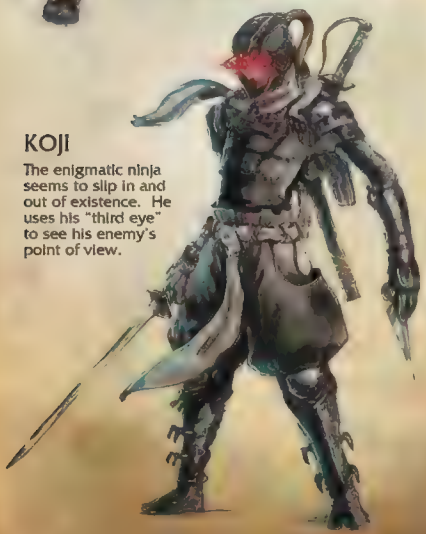
MUZASHI

The price of becoming "unrivaled under the sun" is the death of everything he loves.

The "Senaka" (backbone) is affixed with the five rings representing the five elemental forms that Muzashi's sword can take.

KOJI

The enigmatic ninja seems to slip in and out of existence. He uses his "third eye" to see his enemy's point of view.

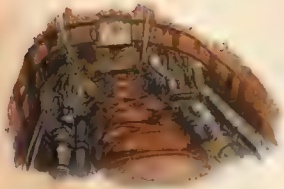


The blades of the "Fuma Kodachi" and the chain-sickle are said to be weightless.

Inspired by Merlin's visions of "a time to come," ARHTR's helmet enhances his battle senses. It also filters out the alchemic hallucinogen gas that is used to control the masses in the Camelot police state.

ARTHR's gauntlet is said to produce a "shield of darkness that rebuffs all manner of blades and arrows."

ARTHR None dare question the vigilent ruler of the Camelot police state.



The controls of the "Draig" only respond to the leader of the guerilla war, GWEN, the White Ghost.

The "Draig" (dragon) battle tank is used in the guerilla war against the Camelot police state.

DRAVN
520 AD

ROML

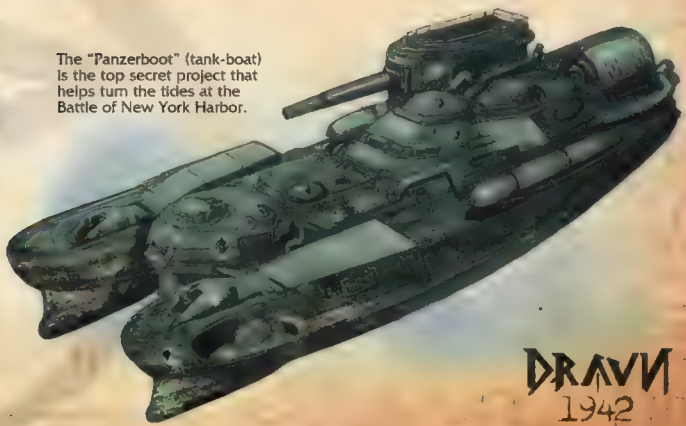
There are unsubstantited rumors that the famed tank commander has technology that allows him to be two places at once.

ROML's "Empfanger" backpack allows him to transmit his will to his troops in battle.

GESPENSTER

No one knows who is beneath the mask, but he is the true ***will*** behind the rise of the evil of the ages.

The "Panzerboot" (tank-boat) is the top secret project that helps turn the tides at the Battle of New York Harbor.



DRAVN
1942

VLAAD

He is called "death from above" and "death from the darkness." Yet, he seeks redemption.

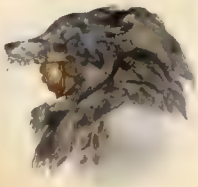
Built in secret by the Order of the Dracu, the "Aripa" (wing) is a backpack device that disrupts the "nature of falling to earth." It runs on human blood and gives off a strange hum.

VLAAD's enemies say his impaling device sends a dark energy spike up from the ground hundreds of feet away from him.

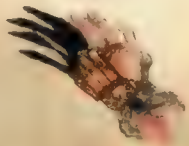
RADU

Brother, betrayer, and mortal enemy of VLAAD. Commander of the Janissary "Wolf" brigade.

Radu's "Lup Putere" (wolf power) technology allows him to track his prey from great distances and to anticipate the moves of his enemies.



The "Gheara" (black claw) can tear though armor and bone.

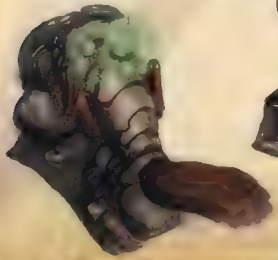


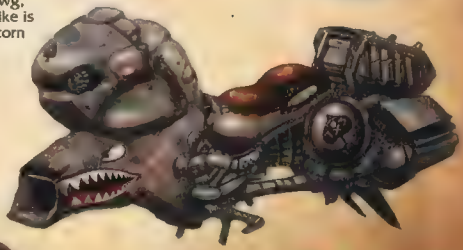
SKUL

An AIM (Artifically Intelligent Marine), manufactured by SynOps Corp, who begins to feel guilt after severe cranial damage in battle.

FogletArm has programs for dozens of weapon types.

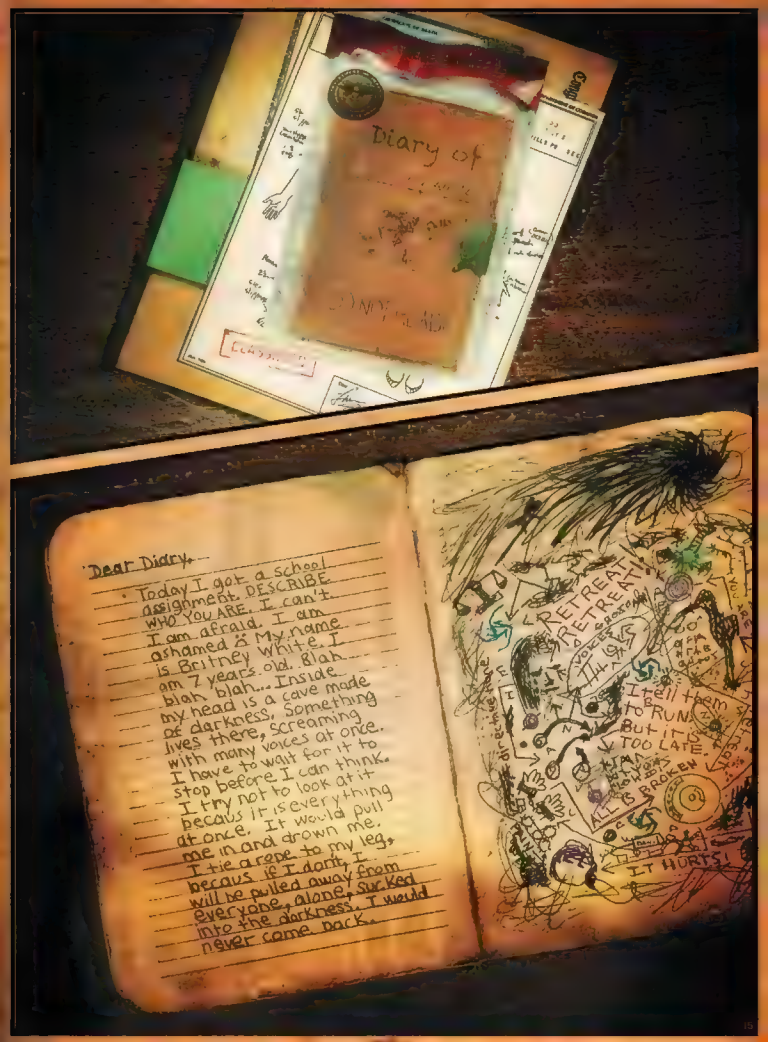
Affectionately nicknamed "The Dawg," the standard issue military hoverbike is used by SKUL to wander the war torn streets of Neojersalem.

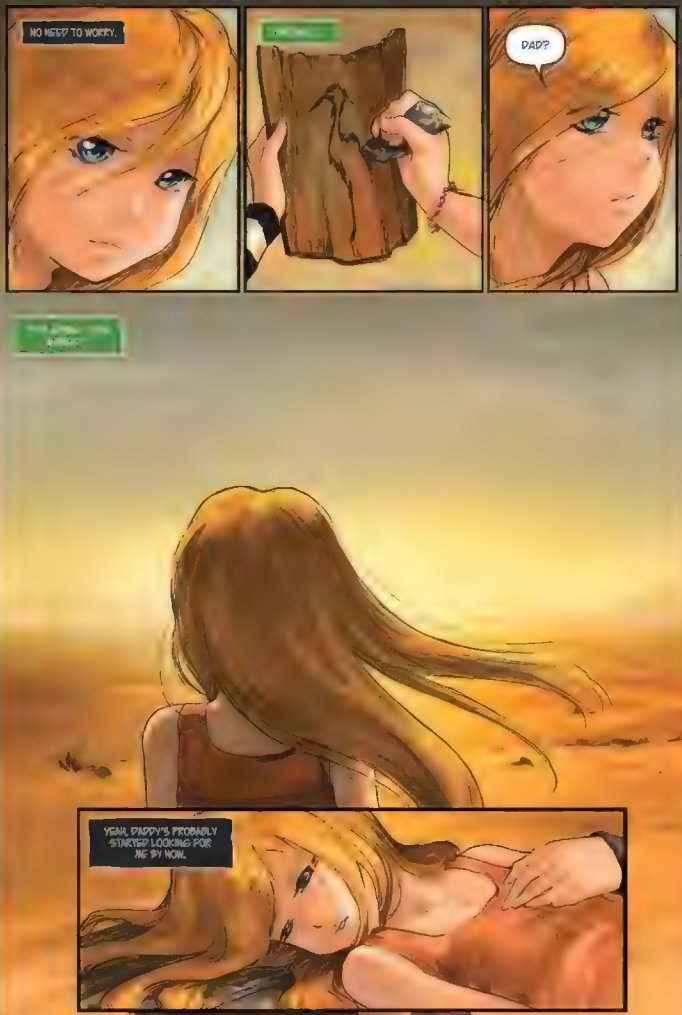




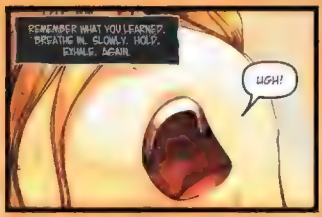
DRAVN 2159

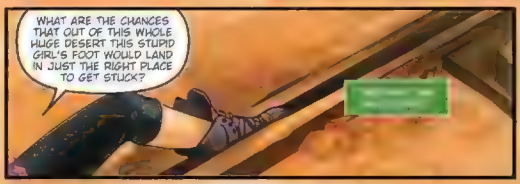
Girl of Sorrow

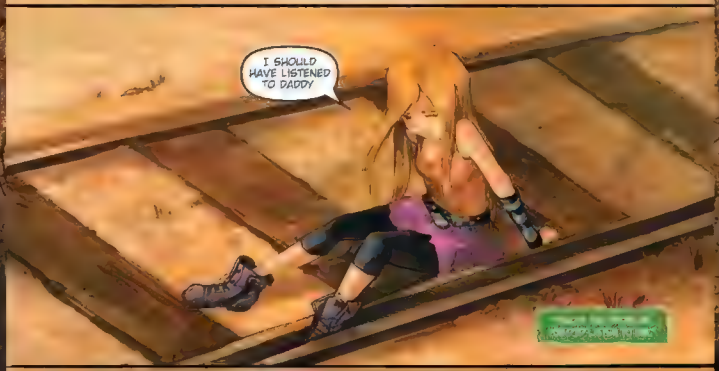

Diary of
Dear Diary,
Today I got a school dasignment. DESCRIBE WHO YOU ARE. I can't. I am afraid. I am ashamed :(My name is Britney White. I am 7 years old. Blah blah blah... Inside my head is a cave made of darkness. Something lives there, screaming with many voices at once. I have to wait for it to stop before I can think. I try not to look at it because it is everything at once. It would pull me in and drown me. I tie a rope to my leg, because if I don't, I will be pulled away from everyone, alone, sucked into the darkness. I would never come back.
RETREAT
RETREAT
I tell them to RUN but it's TOO LATE.
ALL IS BROKEN
IT HURTS!


NO NEED TO WORRY.
DAD?
YEAH, DADDY'S PROBABLY STARTED LOOKING FOR ME BY NOW.

NO! IT'S COMING AGAIN.

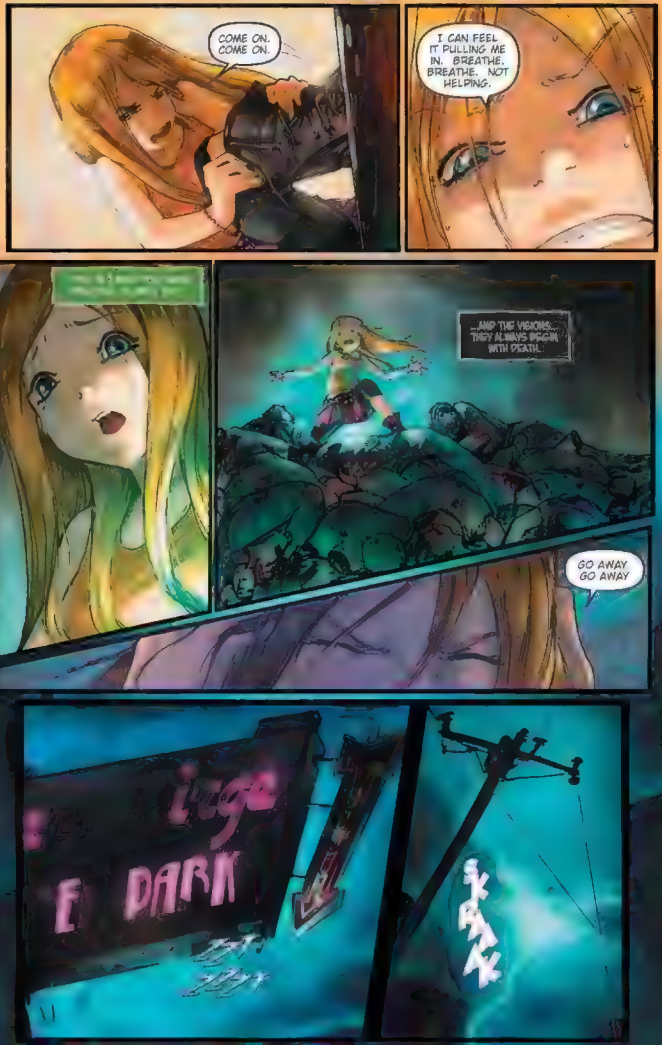

REMEMBER WHAT YOU LEARNED? BREATHE IN. SLOWLY. HOLD. EXHALE. AGAIN.
UGH!


WHAT ARE THE CHANCES THAT OUT OF THIS WHOLE HUGE DESERT THIS STUPID GIRL'S FOOT WOULD LAND IN JUST THE RIGHT PLACE TO GET STUCK?


I SHOULD HAVE LISTENED TO DADDY

BRITNEY, YA KNOW I HATE PUNISHING YOU BUT YOU GOTTA STOP PLAYING NOSES AND WANDERING AROUND THE DESERT BY YOURSELF. I DON'T WANT TO TIE YOU HERE FOREVER. I'LL GET A TRANSFER SOON.

I SHOULD HAVE BEEN HOME HOURS AGO. HE'S PROBABLY SO WORR...
IT'S COMING AGAIN.
I FEEL...
METAL TEARING INTO MY SKIN. AND THE FOUL SMELL OF THIS DUNGEON...
HEAD IS RIPPING APART INSIDE.
CAN'T TELL WHAT'S REAL WHOSE VOICE THAT WAS...
THE DARKNESS IS COMING TO SWALLOW ME UP
PLEASE COME FIND ME, DADDY


COME ON. COME ON.
I CAN FEEL IT PULLING ME IN. BREATHE. BREATHE. NOT HELPING.
...AND THE VISIONS... THEY ALWAYS BEGIN WITH DEATH.
GO AWAY. GO AWAY
DARK
DARK

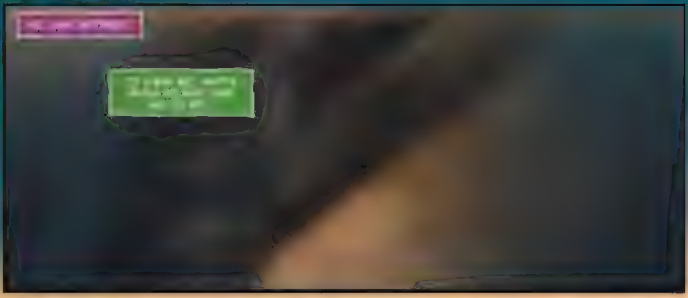
OH MY GOD!! THAT'S ME! THAT'S ME!! OLDER BUT IT IS ME... WHAT DOES IT MEAN? I HAVEN'T SEEN THIS BEFORE.

WHAT ARE YOU, FAILEUS?!
...YOU'VE BEEN HURT SO MUCH, BRITNEY. I DON'T WANT YOU TO HURT ANYMORE.
I CAN TAKE AWAY THE VOICES... AND THE TERRIBLE VISIONS.
I FEEL THIS WARMTH INSIDE, LIKE I'VE KNOWN YOU FOREVER.
I'M NOT AFRAID OF YOU. BUT I KNOW I SHOULD BE.
WAIT... WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

GET AWAY!!!
I FELT YOU INSIDE MY HEAD, TRYING TO SUCK SOMETHING OUT.
I CAN MAKE YOU WHOLE AGAIN, BRITNEY. I CAN MAKE EVERYTHING WHOLE.
THIS WORLD GROANS UNDER SUFFERING AND VIOLENCE. AND WE ARE ALL FORCED TO EXIST WITHIN IT. IT MUST BE UNDONE.
SOMETIMES I WANT TO DIE. BUT WHO ARE YOU TO MAKE THAT CHOICE FOR EVERYONE.

IT HAS ALREADY BEEN WRITTEN.
POOR LITTLE BRITNEY... YOU CAN'T STOP THE WAR.
WHATEVER YOU'RE PLANNING TO DO, I KNOW IT HAS TO BE WRONG
DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND BRITNEY?
YOU AND I ARE THE FUTURE.

ALL THE OLD THINGS WILL PASS AWAY.
ALL THINGS WILL BE NEW.



FOOT STILL STUCK.

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DRAVN 1918: Two Masters

WE ARE DISMEMBERED, DECAYED, AND OTHERWISE ROTTING INTO PUB GRUB, AND YET WE ARE NOT NEARLY AS HIDEOUS AS YOU, OLD BOY.
BLOODY WELL SAID! WE FIND THIS WHOLE AFFAIR TERRIFYING, INGLORIOUS AND WELL... NOT VERY SPORTING.
BUT NOT YOU, OLD CHAP...
IT IS FAR BETTER TO FIGHT A DEMON FROM WITHOUT AS YOU DID, THAN TO FIGHT IT FROM WITHIN AS I DO.
DOG BULLOCKS MATE, YOU WANT US TO FEEL SORRY FOR YOU?!
THAT'S CRACKIN' HILARIOUS!
WE COULD SEE IT IN YOUR EYES WHEN YOU MASHED US INTO PEAS AND CARROTS...
I UNDERSTAND DUTY AND COUNTRY AND ALL THAT CODSWALLUP , BUT GAWD BLIMEY, YOU OFFED US WITH ALL THE EMOTION OF FILLING OUT A BLOODY TAX FORM.
YOU BLOODY WELL REVEL IN ALL THIS.
BUT YOU FAIL TO SEE THE TORMENT INSIDE ME RENTING MY HEAD INTO DELIRIUM. CONSIDER THE FACT THAT I AM CURRENTLY CONVERSING WITH THREE CORPSES.
THAT'S COZ YOU'RE A NUTTER. WE'RE NOT REALLY TALKING, MATE. THAT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE.
CHEERIO. SAY HELLO TO LUCIE FOR US.

BUT I'M NOT AND DREAMING IS FOOLISH.
KEEP MOVING.
SOMETHING'S WRONG.

I MUST INFORM THE BASE THE ALLIES ARE HERE AND THAT WE ARE OUTNUMBERED.
IT WILL TAKE THEM A FEW MINUTES TO DECODE MY MESSAGE.
I COULD JUST TURN AROUND AND CRAWL AWAY.
NO ONE WOULD EVER KNOW.
EXCEPT HERR KOM.
MESSAGE COMING THROUGH
WHAT WORDS OF WISDOM DO THEY OFFER ME TODAY?
"RETREAT. YOU ARE TOO VALUABLE."

STRANGE. IF EVERY MAN'S VALUE WERE JUDGED BY HIS ABILITY TO KILL, WE SHOULD HAVE NO CIVILIZATION.
NO SOUND IS MORE HORRIFYING.
AAAAAAAAAAAGH!!!
TOO LATE FOR REASON ANYWAY.
TIME FOR THE OTHER PART OF ME TO TAKE OVER.
THEY'LL BE NO CHANCE FOR OUR MEN IF I LEAVE.
THERE'S A JERRY. KILL'IM!
MUSIC TO MY DERANGED EARS.

IN THE ABSENCE OF REASONABLE ORDERS...
I WILL FIND SOMETHING...
AND KILL IT.
THE ATTACK MUST BE LIKE LIGHTING FROM HELL.
PRECISE AND UNEXPECTED.

PLEASE NO. FIGHT.
MORTAL DANGER IS AN EFFECTIVE ANTIDOTE FOR SYMPATHY.
THERE IS NO SURRENDER. NOT TO ME.
I FEAR THERE ARE TOO MANY, EVEN FOR THIS THING THAT I AM.
ARRRGH!
KRAAAK!!
POWER DOWN TO ALMOST ZERO.
TO MY COUNTRYMEN BEHIND ME..
AND TO MY SWEET LUCIE... I AM BOTH SORRY AND ASHAMED.
I BURY MYSELF AMONGST THE DEAD.

I'M REALLY SORRY FOR YA, MISTER ROMI. BUT JUST LET GO AND DIE. YOU WON'T HAVE TO KILL AGAIN. REJOICE IN THAT.
PLEASE SPEAK TO ME NO MORE. I ADMIT. I AM HIDEOUS. BUT I AM ALSO THE REVERSE OF SUCH A CREATURE.
LIKE A FRAIL WOOD AND FABRIC SPARROW WITH A MACHINE GUN AFFIXED TO ITS NOSE.
IF ONLY I HAD LET MY LEG BLEED OUT, THEN IT ALL WOULD HAVE ENDED HERE IN THIS PLACE WHERE I BELONG.

HOW CAN I GO HOME?
HOW CAN I WALK THE STREETS OF MY BELOVED HEIDENHEIM WITH SUCH SHAME AND DISHONOR?
HOW CAN I MEET MY DEAR LUCIE'S GAZE?
SCHEISST?!

ERWN ROHL, DON'T BE AFRAID.
YOUR TIME IS YET TO COME
WHATEVER YOU ARE, LET ME DIE IN PEACE
YOU OF LITTLE FAITH.
I'M HERE TO OFFER YOU REVENGE AND THE POWER TO GET IT.
WILL YOU TAKE IT?

WHO ARE YOU?
I'M HERE TO HELP YOU, HERR ROML.
YOU CAN SPLIT AS WELL?
DON'T WORRY, YOUR EYESIGHT SHOULD GET BACK TO NORMAL SOON.
YOU'VE BEEN ASLEEP FOR THREE DAYS.
WHAT?
WHERE AM I?
IN THE HOSPITAL. YOU WERE VERY LUCKY...
... YOU WERE THE ONLY SURVIVOR OF YOUR BATTALION BEFORE OUR FORCES WITHDREW FROM THE FRONT.
EXPLAINS MY NIGHTMARE, ONLY THIS ONE I DON'T THINK I'LL FORGET.
GOD MUST HAVE SOMETHING IN STORE FOR YOU.
GOD? HE'S ABANDONED US TO OUR NIGHTMARE. AT LEAST THE VISIONS WON'T TORMENT ME ANY MORE.
OH, I WANTED TO GIVE YOU THIS. YOU WERE CLUTCHING IT VERY HARD WHEN THEY FOUND YOU.

Los Angeles Examiner

D-DAY LOST!

ALLIED ARMIES PUSHED INTO SEA

U-boats reach New York Harbor

On Jul... German U-boat in ... Gang at Dowagress Ma Arthu... and Secretary of ... by the ... U-boat ... S. wate... of Nags... months ... long ... Army ... ship ... sunk ... repres... July, ... becam... manning ... ocean ... Getco... since ... win ... of hist... at Chop... off the ... defic... people ...

As the ... physica... at enco... has van... beaches ... at enco... has van... small p... landers ... Ocrac ... clerks ... patche...

Many ... abo...

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Great Power and Screw the Responsibility!

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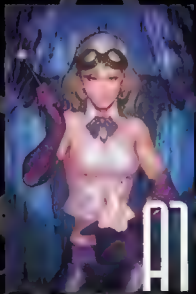
ODYSSEY

CARPE DIEM



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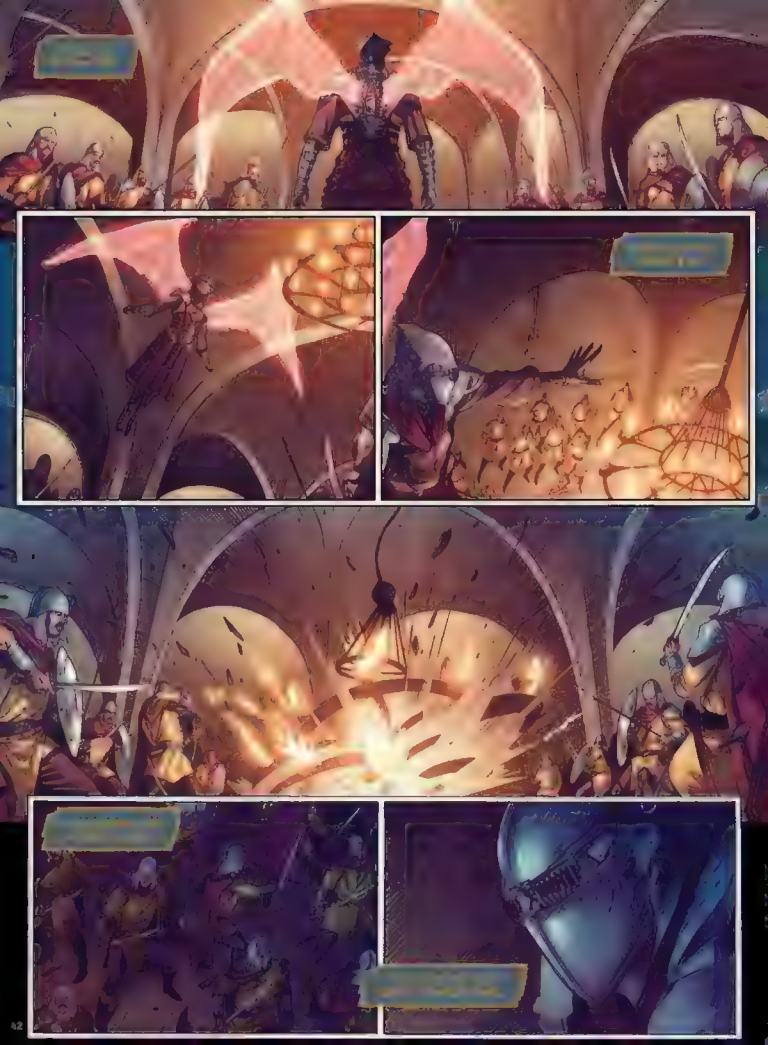
DRAVN 145 : Brotherly Love

TONIGHT WE LEAVE THIS PLACE.



WHAT IS THIS, BROTHER? I DO NOT UNDERSTAND
NO HARM WILL COME TO YOU. PUT DOWN YOUR ARMS AND YOU WILL BE SAFE.
SAFE . FROM WHAT?
THE CONSEQUENCES OF YOUR MAD PLAN!
YEARS OF PLANNING OUR FREEDOM? IF THAT MAKES ME MAD, THAN LET IT BE SO.
IT IS OVER, BROTHER
THE ONE I WOULD TAKE AN ARROW FOR IS NOW THE ONE BEHIND THE BOW?
SURELY YOU SAW THIS COMING.
MY FAITH IN YOU WOULD NOT ALLOW ME TO CONJURE THIS MOMENT IN MY MOST UNRESTRAINED IMAGINATIONS
YOU POISON OUR FAMILY WITH THE DEEPEST OF SADNESS. HOW COULD YOU BETRAY THE OATH YOU TOOK IN FRONT OF OUR FATHER AND MOTHER.

YOUR BIRTH BINDS YOU TO THE ORDER OF THE DRAGON JUST AS YOUR BLOOD HOLDS YOU TO THE PRESERVATION OF THE SAINTS.
HENCE, YOU SHALL SHEPHERD THE WEAK FROM THE SNARES OF THOSE WHO WOULD BRING HARM AND RUIN TO YOUR BROTHERS.
AND YOU SHALL STRIKE DOWN THE WICKED AND THE UNJUST, THAT THE BLOOD OF YOUR FOES SHALL GIVE LIFE TO THE ORDER
THIS IS BOTH MY PROUDEST AND SADDEST DAY.
THIS WORLD IS FULL OF HURT. PROMISE ME. NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS, YOU WILL ALWAYS TAKE CARE OF EACH OTHER
ALWAYS, MOTHER.

RADU!!
NO!
YOU SAVED ME AGAIN BIG BROTHER.
VLAAD.. LOOK!
FATHER!

PLEASE... SURELY THERE IS A BETTER SOLUTION. I'LL DIE WITHOUT MY SONS.
NOOOOOOO!!

WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU? WE'RE HERE FOREVER NOW. WE'LL DIE FOR CERTAIN IF WE TRY TO ESCAPE
I SWORE TO MOTHER WE WOULD RETURN TO HER
NONE OF THAT MATTERS NOW. .
DON'T EVER SAY THAT
NEVER FORGET WHERE YOU CAME FROM, OR WHAT YOU ARE

YOUR DATES FROM AFAR, SIRE.
YOU MUST HAVE MISTAKEN ME FOR...
NO MISTAKE, MY LORD.
I KNOW YOU WELL AND WHEN THE TIME IS RIGHT YOU WILL DESTROY THE FOUNDATION OF YOUR FOES.
REVEAL YOURSELF, WOMAN
I'M A VILE AND HIDEOUS CREATURE... A LOWLY DELIVERER OF ILL GOTTEN MESSAGES.
I TOO AM ILL GOTTEN.
NEVER, MY SON.
ALL THAT I HAVE IS YOURS

YOUR HANDS SO ROUGH AND STRONG..
YOU'VE CHANGED SO MUCH
WHAT IS THIS?
FATHER'S ARMOR AND..
MOTHER?!
MOTHER!
MOTHER!! I LOVE YOU!!

...AND YOU DARE TO DISHONOR IT BY TURNING AGAINST YOUR OWN FAMILY?
IN TIME YOU WILL SEE THAT, LIKE FATHER, I HAVE CHOSEN THE HARDER RIGHT TODAY
YOU TAKE THAT BACK.
YOUR MAD PLAN WOULD PLUNGE OUR PEOPLE INTO ANOTHER WAR JUST FOR THE SAKE OF PETTY REVENGE. THERE IS SOMETHING HIGHER THAT WE MUST SERVE. YOU KNOW THIS TO BE THE TRUTH
I SEE IT IN YOUR EYES... YOU KNOW YOU HAVE DONE A GREAT WRONG TONIGHT
WE ARE ALL REQUIRED TO DO WRONG. IT IS WRITTEN IN THE BLOOD OF LIFE ITSELF. THIS IS THE CURSE
NO, BROTHER. YOU HAVE BROUGHT THE CURSE UPON YOURSELF
ALWAYS SO RECKLESS. STILL I SUPPOSE THAT DEMON'S STRENGTH IS WHAT KEPT YOU ALIVE.
THAT IT HAS.
I CAN'T LET YOU LEAVE HERE TONIGHT
I KNOW
MOTHER... PLEASE FORGIVE ME
MAYBE ONE DAY YOU'LL BOTH UNDERSTAND WHAT I DO NOW

I TRULY AM SORRY
ARRRGGHHH!!!

FINISH ME NOW, BROTHER.
WHY? BECAUSE YOU WOULD IF THE POSITIONS WERE REVERSED?
I... I WOULD
BUT I'M NOT YOU
YOU'LL REGRET NOT KILLING ME TODAY.
NO I WON'T.

DRAVN 520: Kingdom on Earth

Ministry of Righteousness

For Immediate Display from the Office of His Royal Highness

Let it be known to all subjects of the Realm of Camelot: On this day, The Tenth of November in the year of our Lord 575 that King Arthur keeper of the divine blade and possessor of the sacred blood who by the blessing of God extends his sway over the world's strand doth issue this decree:

Citizenry Behavioral Mandate

Let it be known on this day that Lord Arthur keeper of the divine blade and possessor of the sacred blood who by the blessing of God extends his sway over the world's strand doth issue this decree to the subjects of Camelot:

I. God gives might to the strong.

II. No manner of good comes from the weak.

III. No word is higher than the King.

IV. The blood of the King binds us all.

V. Every man, noble and low, shall pledge his life to the Crown and the Round Table.

VI. A Knight of the Round is above reproach.

VII. No man, be he subject or Knight, shall kill without necessity.

VIII. Whoever seeks safe haven from the barbarous and cruel shall find it in Camelot.

IX. Whoever trusts the sovereignty of the King and the Might of the Round shall forge peace.

X. Whoever draws arms against the peoples of Camelot shall come to know the wrath of heaven.

RIOK, HOW MUCH FARTHER MUST WE...
SIR GAWAIN, YOUR PATIENCE WILL BE REWARDED.
FOR THAT IS THE HOUSE WE ARE LOOKING FOR.
Y...YES, MILORDS?
OUT OF OUR WAY!
YOU AND YOUR HOUSEHOLD HAVE BEEN FOUND GUILTY OF CRIMES AGAINST THE CROWN AND OUR LORD REGENT ARTHUR.
WE ARE HEREBY AUTHORIZED TO SEARCH YOUR DOMICILE FOR ARTEFACTS OF MALFEASANCE.

NOTHING, SIRE.
IT IS HERE. MY INFORMANT HAS NEVER BEEN WRONG.
BURN IT TO THE GROUND!
WHAT IF YOU'RE RIGHT?
I AM.
IT CAN SURVIVE A FIRE.
NO! PLEASE! LET MY FAMILY GO.
AAAAGGGHHHHH!!!
THANK YOU..
YOU'RE A SICK MAN, RIOK

SHORTLY...
HOW ARE YOU GOING TO FIND IT IN THIS MESS?
HAVE NO FEAR, GAWAIN.
IT'S EXACTLY WHERE I KNEW IT WOULD BE.
I WILL NEVER DOUBT YOU AGAIN, PRIEST.
NOW LET'S NOT WASTE ANY MORE TIME AND RIDE BACK...
. TO CAMELOT.
"IT'S BEEN NEARLY TWO WEEKS SINCE GAWAIN AND RIOK GOT BACK..."

...YET STILL NO VISIONS TO CLUES AS TO THIS ORB'S CONNECTION TO THE GRAIL OR WHERE THIS COMPASS IS SUPPOSED TO LEAD ME TO NEXT.
MAYBE THE WOMAN IN MY VISIONS... WHAT?!
...NOW EXCALIBUR? IT'S PULLING TOWARDS IT
MERLIN WOULD PROBABLY TELL ME NOT TO DO THIS...
THE LIGHT FROM THE MOON STIRS BOTH THE COMPASS AND THE ORB...
DEAR GODS!
AT LAST! THE PUZZLE IS COMING TOGETHER.

IT'S IN MY BLOOD... YET IT FEELS... EXHILARATING...
IS IT... SHOWING ME SOMETHING?
GUIDING ME... WHERE?
DAMN! IT WOULD LEAD ME HERE NEXT...
SHE LOOKS FAMILIAR.
THE WOMAN IN MY VISIONS.

AVALON
LAST FREE BASTION IN THE REALM.
THE RESISTANCE AGAINST THE ARMIES OF CAMELOT HAS GROWN WEAK. ARTHUR NOW SEEKS THE ONE THING TO MAKE HIS DOMINION ABSOLUTE: A THING CALLED THE GRAIL.
SOUNDS LIKE...
HORSES!!
I MUST WARN THE OTHERS...

TOO LATE. BUT THEY'LL HEAR THIS...

STAND DOWN, WITCH. GIVE YOURSELF UP!
NOT TO YOU SIR!
IF YOU WANTED ME DEAD, I WOULD BE.
SO I'M NOT GOING DOWN WITHOUT A FIGHT...

AND I'M GOING TO KILL AS MANY OF YOU AS I CAN.
NOT ME, BITCH!
WHA...?
TUT, TUT. GUESS THEY FORGOT TO TELL YOU ABOUT THE WHITE GHOST.
HOW? NO!
PERSONALLY I'D PREFER THE RED QUEEN...
ENOUGH!
YOU WON'T FIND MY ARMOR SO EASY TO PIERCE.
"TAKE HER TO THE KING BEFORE I FORGET MYSELF AND SLIT HER THROAT."

TEAR THE PLACE APART. DO WHAT YOU MUST. I WANT THE GRAIL BROUGHT TO ME NOW!
TO YOU RIOK?
MY LORD, YOU KNOW ONLY THE ORDAINED ARE TO HANDLE THESE ARTIFACTS.
FINALLY..
THE WHITE GHOST!
THE DEVIL-WITCH WHO HAS MURDERED OUR MEN BY THE DOZENS!
ALLOW ME TO SLAY HER WHERE SHE STANDS.
LEAD US TO THE GRAIL AND YOUR PEOPLE SHALL BE SPARED AND YOU WILL BE GRANTED A SWIFT AND PAINLESS DEATH.
SUCH WONDERFUL OPTIONS. I'M HONORED YOUR LORD.
MY LIEGE...

I FEEL THE WHEREABOUTS OF THE GRAIL IS NEARBY, LEIGE. UNFORTUNATELY, THE EXACT LOCATION WILL REMAIN UNKNOWN WITHOUT THE MENACE TO YOUR REALM THAT STANDS BEFORE YOU.
HOW DARE YOU DECEIVE OUR LORD... I WILL MINCE YOU FOR THE DOGS!
AH, GAWAIN... BLUSTERY BRUTE OR FROTHING QUEEN- I HAVEN'T YET DECIDED
BLASPHEMER! YOUR FEEBLE SPELLS ARE IMPOTENT AGAINST MY HARD STEEL.
HOW ROMANTIC.
ENOUGH YOU TWO.
I WANT NOTHING MORE THAN TO SPARE YOUR PEOPLE TODAY. FROM THE BEGINNING, I HAVE ONLY FOUGHT TO BRING GOOD. I ASK YOU, ONE WARRIOR TO ANOTHER, TAKE ME TO THE GRAIL.
NONE OF THEM WILL BE HARMED, I SWEAR IT!

"YOU'LL FIND WHAT YOU WANT BENEATH THE BREOCK DOWNS MONOLITH."
SIRE, LET ME MAKE SURE THE PATH IS SAFE...
IT'S HERE!
...WE CAN'T TAKE THE WORD OF THAT WITCH
THIS IS IT. NOW NOTHING CAN STOP US.
YOU MADE THE RIGHT CHOICE.
ANOTHER PIECE FALLS INTO PLACE.
BUT YOU STILL DON'T KNOW FOR WHAT DO YOU!

"BUT THEN YOU WOULDN'T TELL ME IF YOU KNEW."
LAST NIGHT. THE VISIONS CAME AGAIN.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND THEM.
HOW CAN ONE YEARN AND DREAD AT ONCE?
LOVE... ONE FOOL AFTER ANOTHER.
NO, IT'S NOT THAT. THIS MAN... I'VE NEVER MET HIM. YET...
I'M DRAWN TO HIM FOR REASONS I CAN'T EXPLAIN.

I SEE THROUGH HIS EYES...
I SEE INTO HIS HEART...
I SEE HIM DO HORRIBLE THINGS.

I WAS SO WRONG...
DO NOT WORRY, ARTHR...
GAWAIN WILL DISPOSE OF HER AS SOON AS WE HAVE WHAT WE WANT.
I DON'T KNOW WHY, BUT I DON'T WANT TO SEE HER HURT, MERLIN.
AS YOU WISH, MY LORD.

HEAVY METAL
THE FOUR HORSEMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE
★★★★½
"This is the kind of stuff that Michael Bay looks to for inspiration."
- James Ferguson, www.horrortalk.com
"This is a solid book, with both a layered, gripping story and visceral art."
- Jonathan Pilley, www.omnicomic.com
★★★★★
"Bisley gives readers intense, unforgiving visuals and storytelling that's reminiscent of early Richard Corben."
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"...a balls to the wall non-stop thrill ride that is going to punch you in the face and not look back."
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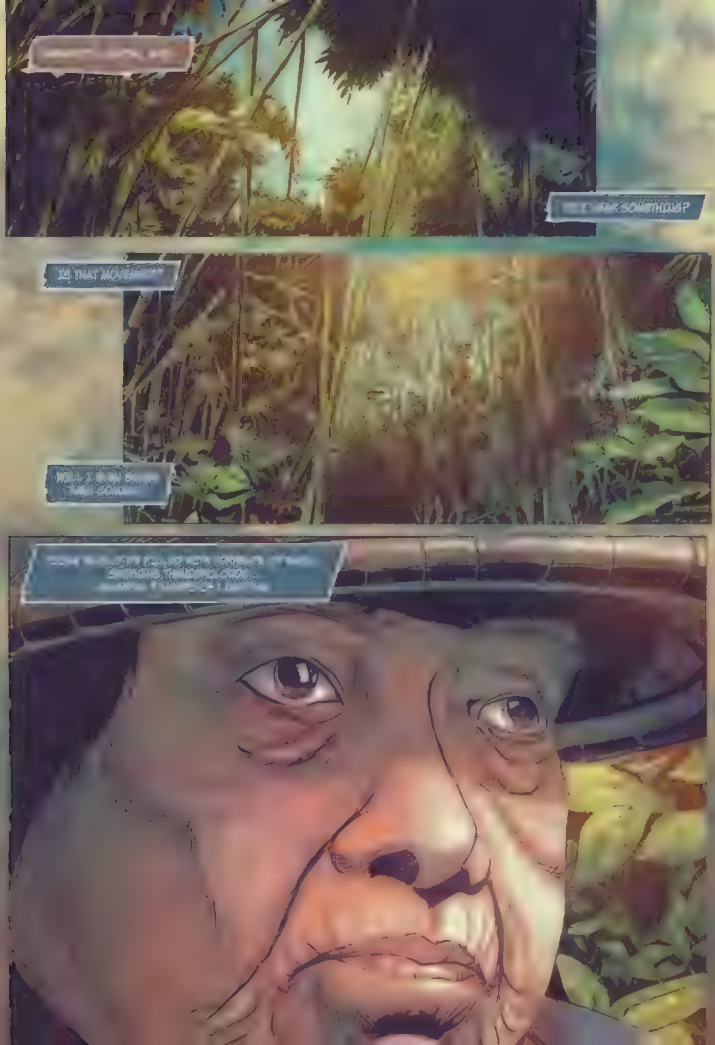
DRAVN 1604:
Above All Names



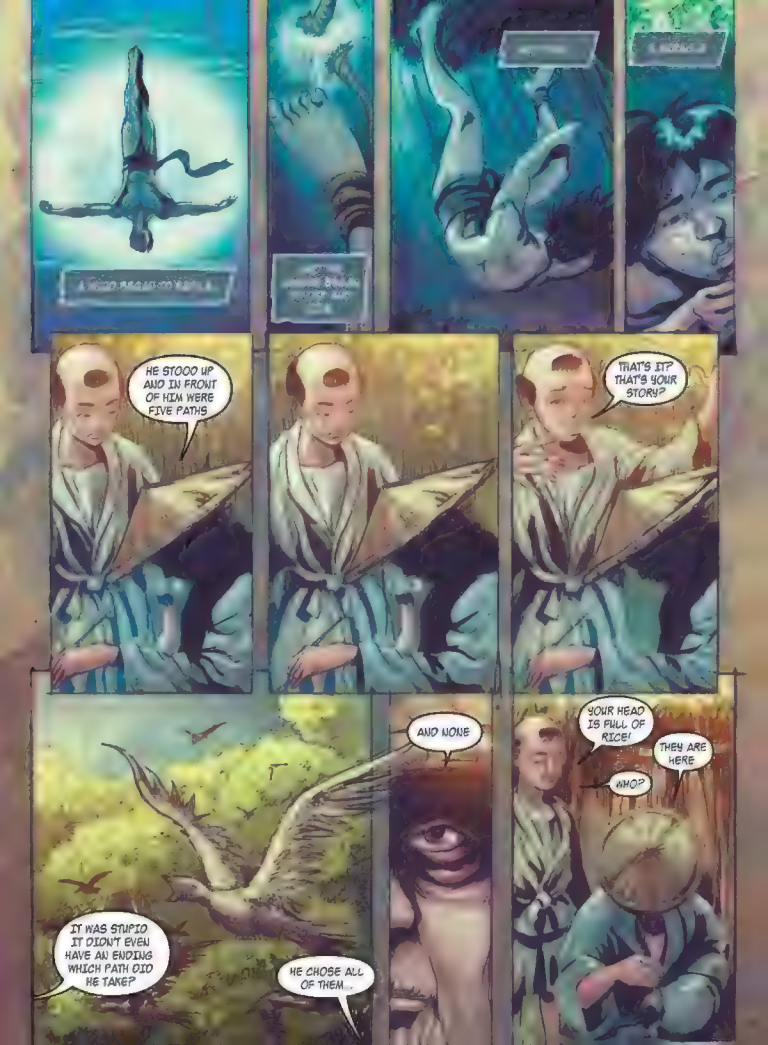
THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PRACTICE AND DOING
SENSEI, I TOO HAVE A WISE SAYING...
TOO MUCH PRACTICE IS BORING.
SOMETIMES A GOOD SMACKING IS BETTER THAN A GREAT SAYING
I WOULD TELL MY MOTHER

AS ARDENTLY AS SHE WANTS YOU TO BE AN ARTIST, I DOUBT SHE WOULD QUESTION MY TACTICS
YOU ARE LUCKY TO HAVE A PAYING STUDENT. OTHERWISE YOU SHOULD STARVE UP HERE IT IS SAID OF YOU THAT YOUR HEAD IS FULL OF RICE AND YOUR BOWL IS EMPTY.
BOKE! WHAT IS THAT?
NO MORE BUNNY RABBITS OR FLOWERS
I WANT DANGER, EXCITEMENT, BATTLES. I WANT TO BE A GREAT SWORDSMAN
YOU SHOULD THINK LIGHTLY OF YOURSELF AND DEEPLY OF THE WORLD

SOUNDS LIKE SOMETHING AN OLD MAN WOULD SAY.
AKI, AKI... WHY DO YOU WANT TO BE A WARRIOR?
IN THE VILLAGE, THEY CALL ME BOZU, THE LITTLE SQUIRT. SOMEDAY, I'LL BE BIGGER THAN ALL OF THEM. I'LL BECOME GREAT AND FAMOUS AND THEY WILL BE AFRAID OF ME.
IT JUST SO HAPPENS THAT I HAVE A STORY OF ANOTHER LITTLE SQUIRT.
AND, CONVINCED THAT HE COULD NEVER BE A WARRIOR, HE SET OUT TO MAKE A NAME FOR HIMSELF.

...AS A MONSTER MADE
HE STALKED THE COUNTRYSIDE, REALIZING HIMSELF A MAN OF ART.

AND THERE CAME EVERYONE WHO HE HAD CUT DOWN TO RAISE UP HIS OWN NAME.
AND THEY WERE THERE TO JUDGE HIM.
WHEN HE SAW WHAT HIS HANDS HELD...


HE STOOD UP AND IN FRONT OF HIM WERE FIVE PATHS
THAT'S IT? THAT'S YOUR STORY?
AND NONE
IT WAS STUPID IT DIDN'T EVEN HAVE AN ENDING WHICH PATH DID HE TAKE?
HE CHOSE ALL OF THEM...
YOUR HEAD IS FULL OF RICE!
THEY ARE HERE
AWO?

AKI, YOU RUN HOME TO YOUR MOTHER. IMMEDIATELY!
USO!
I TOLD YOU TO LEAVE, BOZU!
I WON'T
I TOLD YOU THIS MORNING, THIS IS YOUR LAST LESSON.
BUT I DON'T WANT THAT
YOU ARE A SMART BOY, AKI WHAT DO PEOPLE WHISPER?
THEY SAY, YOU'RE... HIM... UNRIVALED UNDER THE SUN?
WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM?
MY FRIEND

COME THEN LITTLE MAN.
SEE WITH YOUR OWN EYES WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU CHOOSE THE WRONG PATH.
A TOUCH OF WIP IN THE WARM AIR. THE LIGHTEST OF BREEZES BIRDS IN WISTFUL HARMONY.

I WAS WRONG. THIS IS THE PERFECT DAY FOR MY LAST LESSON
AND WHEN IT IS OVER...
YOU KNOW WHY WE ARE HERE, OLD FRIEND
I DO.

by Richard Caldwell

Walking With CTHULHU:

H.P. Lovecraft as psychogeographer, New York City 1924-26

Divining a pocket of history where wordsmith meets metropolis

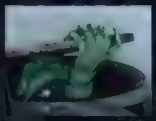
Psychogeography is, after a fashion, the discernment of a locale's aesthetic personality gathered by meanderings and experimentations, weighing the effects of all things ranging from the historical to the architectural, from the psychological to the outright spiritual. It is very much a pseudo-science to be sure, but a growing trend nonetheless, and one that is shining new lighting particularly on the often overlooked environs of older urban settings the world over. In *Walking With CTHULHU*, author David Haden pursues some honestly brilliant associations, namely that even though years before psychogeography was any sort of official practice, none other than the infamous recluse Howard Phillips Lovecraft himself was an inadvertent early explorer of the ideology. More so, that his limited days and nights in New York directly affected much of his later fiction.

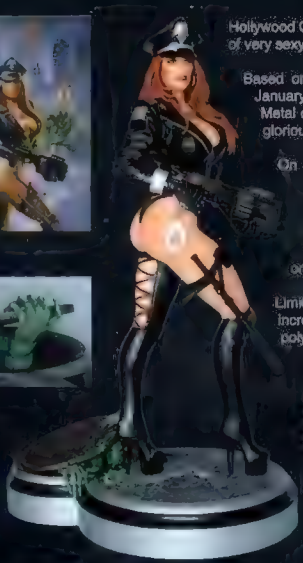
Lovecraft is well known to have spent the majority of his life in Providence, Rhode Island, and though his few years residing in the Big Apple are somewhat well-documented (primarily through letters), a detailed study of this calibre, delving into his exact experiences and the atmospherics enveloping them has never before been accomplished. Haden has written several books before, a number of which regarding Lovecraft and his mythos directly, but his meticulous research in this matter is astoundingly astute. He presents the non-fictional findings of what the full five senses would have offered the imagineering horror scribe, from this especially interesting time for the city when horses were becoming scarce and cars had not yet fully claimed the roadways, where jazz was being born and where prohibition was yet in full swing. While filling the work with photographs and illustrations of the period, along with thoughtful footnotes and a diverse bibliography and index, as well as an annotated copy of the Nyarlathotep tale, Haden does seem to ignore the blisteringly unapologetic (but religiously researched) biography from L. Sprague de Camp in favour of quoting the arguably more rationalizing writings from S.T. Joshi.

And curiously, he does seem to miss a rather large aspect of the era, in that the subway system had only in the years just prior made the final transitions from steam-powered trains to electric, with much of the early incidents of accidents as well as the general negativity then still associated with the subways being a direct result of the smoke filled, hellishly lit tunnels of those earlier years. The many nuances of Lovecraft's paranoia aside, one would think a horror writer would be drawn to such episodes of real world terror, although this was excluded entirely from the large passage regarding the subterranean transportation. Admittedly, much of the book is in clear need of further proofreading, but wholly for an assortment of technical and grammatical gaffes, and not for anything concerning the nature of the content. These qualms aside, *Walking With CTHULHU* is still a true wealth of extremely well-researched information, painting a rich portrait of what life was like for the legendary author, even down to the alley cats and ice cream parlours. Haden found mention of establishments in Lovecraft's various correspondence, then unearthing all that he could of the places and their settings. A herculean task, with nary a stone left unturned. Also of special note is the inference of NYC-based comic book professionals such as Stan Lee, Jack Kirby and even Will Eisner all being influenced specifically by stories Lovecraft penned in the city of cities, being surprisingly sensical and especially interesting. (Indeed, might the Black Panther's high tech, Vibranium-filled Wakanda also be some manner of statement on the "African iron working" claims of the discussed controversial anthropologist Franz Boas, whose writings Lovecraft was apparently well aware of?)

Of course, the routes traveled by Haden in linking the origins of CTHULHU and the sunken city of R'lyeh both to Lovecraft's time in New York City are the truest prize to be found in these pages. *Walking With CTHULHU* provides in full, quite refreshingly, commentary upon the master that is boldly new and decidedly free of the inconsequential or the irreverent. If you appreciate back stories, this is your snifter of oblivion, totally.

Heavy Metal Girls - CYBERCOP





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DRAVN 2169: *I Am*

THE SYNOPS CORPORATION IS PROUD TO BRING YOU THE LATEST IN MILITARY TECHNOLOGY
SYNOPS CORPORATION
OUR POPULAR ARTIFICIALLY INTELLIGENT MARINE LINE, THAT WAS PRIMARILY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CAPTURE OF DANCHACH, HAS BEEN UPGRADED
WITH THE AIM2 WE HAVE TAKEN OUR SOFTWARE UPGRADE BEYOND EVERYONE'S EXPECTATIONS
THE AIM2 NOW COMES WITH A DRAMATIC NEW FEATURE INSPIRED BY ANCIENT MYTH
WE HAVE PROGRAMMED A SERIES OF EMOTIONAL RESPONSES INTO THE UPGRADE. THE ONE WE ARE MOST PLEASED WITH IS THE ONE YOU'RE ABOUT TO WITNESS HERE BETWEEN A NEW AIM2 MODEL AND
THROUGH OUR TESTING WE REALIZED WE NEEDED TO CREATE A CLOSER TIE BETWEEN THE AIM UNIT AND HIS HUMAN COUNTERPART
THE AIM2 MODEL LOOK MORE HUMAN THAN BEFORE
WE HOPE THEY WILL BOND WITH THEIR
WE FOUND THAT THIS HAS A POSITIVE EFFECT ON BOTH THE AIM UNIT AND THE MILITARY

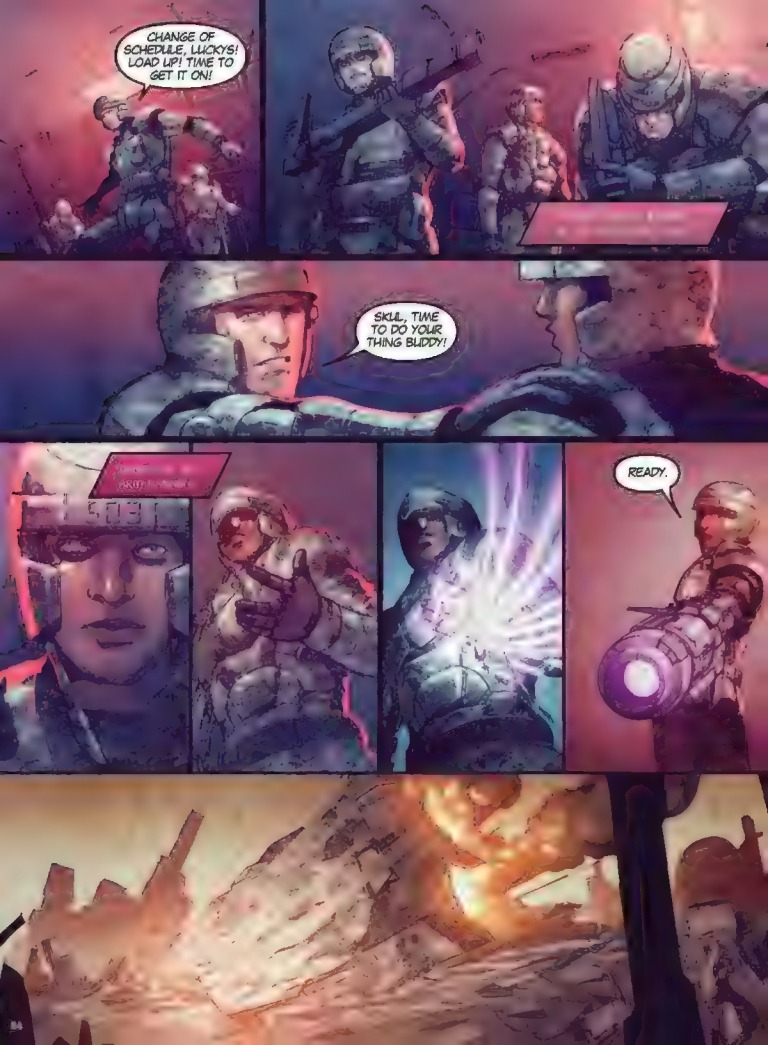
THE DVN UPGRADE INCLUDES THE NANITE WEAPONS MEMORY SYSTEM, CAPABLE OF SELECTING AND REPLICATING ANY WEAPON STORED IN ITS SYSTEM.
EVEN COMBINING ELEMENTS TO CREATE NEW WEAPONS!
BUT IT IS THE BONDING PROCESS WE HAVE BEEN MOST EXCITED ABOUT. BOTH THE AIM AND HUMAN UNITS BOND AND IMPLICITLY TRUST ONE ANOTHER.
SEEMS THAT IS ENOUGH! SOLDIERS LIKE CORPORAL JEFFERS SEEM MORE THAN WILLING TO PROJECT THEIR OWN EMOTIONAL RESPONSES ON TO THE UNITS.
HAVE PROGRAMMED IN A FEW MINOR EMOTION RESPONSES, NOTHING TOO MUCH, SO WE DON'T INTERFERE WITH ITS CORE PROGRAMMING.
AND, OF COURSE THEY CONTINUE TO SEND FEEDBACK EVEN WHEN POWERED DOWN. YOU'LL SEE ON EVERYTHING THAT IS, SO FAR, A PLEA TO THE MISSION.

SARGE, DO YOU HAVE TO SMOKE THAT STINK WEED?
YOU'RE "ALREADY DEAD" SO WHAT DO YOU CARE?

AT LEAST WE CAN THROW THE 'TIN-CAN' OUT IN FRONT OF US.
SAME SHIT. DIFFERENT DAY.
CAN'T BELIEVE WE GOT STUCK WITH 503 AGAIN. HE'S THE LAST AIM2 LEFT FOR CHRIST'S SAKE
SURE, LET'S DROP THE LUCKY 13'S IN THE MIDDLE OF LUSTERTOWN WITH THE OLDEST PIECE OF SHIT IN THE INVENTORY.
REAL FUNNY, GAZER. YOU JUST JINXED US ALL.
I LIKE OLD SKUL. HE'S GOT SOUL. BEEN THROUGH SOME CRAZY SHIT TOGETHER AND NEVER LEFT US HANGIN'...
RIGHT BUDDY?

THARE SHE BLOWS, MATIES. THREE-O-CLOCK LOW.

YOUR BIRTH CONTROL DEVICES MALFUNCTIONING, TRIPPER?
WHOA.
LOT OF GOOD DUDES GETTING ZIPPED IN FOR THAT BULLSHIT. HOLY GROUND, MY ASS
SHUT UP, MAN!
SEE GAZER, YOU JINXED US!
KDOOM
GAZER! THIS IS YOUR FAULT!!


CHANGE OF SCHEDULE, LUCKYS! LOAD UP! TIME TO GET IT ON!
SKUL, TIME TO DO YOUR THING BUDDY!
READY.

EXIT
LET'S OPEN UP THE GATES TO HELL, BOYS.
503! ARE YOU READY?
503
MADE READY, SERGEANT.
WHERE THE HELL ARE WE!?
FF
SSSSSSS!
SHIT ON A SHINGLE.
WHAT?

INCOMING!! GET TO COVER. IT'S A RPMP!
SKULL! GET UP AND OPEN FIRE!!

SKUL! WEAPON UP!
SKUL? SKUL!! HELP US!! PLEASE!
FIRE, YOU GAWDDAMED HUNK A' SHIT!!!
NEUTRALIZE ENEMY, 508! THAT'S AN ORDER!
DIRECTIVE... NONE!

THAT'S IT SIR.
THAT'S HOW YOUR REPORT ENDS, SERGEANT...
BUT IS THAT HOW YOU WANT IT TO END?
SIR?
WE'VE BEEN ASKED BY THE GOVERNMENT TO ASSIST SYNOPS IN BRINGING HIM IN.
SEEMS YOUR LITTLE TIN COWARD HAS TAKEN UP WITH AN ORPHAN AND SOME PROSTITUTE. YOUR MOST LETHAL WEAPON HAS BECOME AN ART ASSISTANT AT A BROTHEL DAYCARE.
IT SEEMS "SKILL" IS OPERATING UNDER SOME "FREE WILL" BULLSHIT NOW.
BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE, ISN'T IT?
SO WE'VE BEEN TOLD. NO AIM MODEL HAS EVER GONE AGAINST THEIR PROGRAMMING BEFORE.
THIS IS WAR, COLONEL ECKHEART. THERE'S NO GUARANTEES.
PROBLEM IS... THEY NEED TO EXAMINE HIM, SO THEY WANT HIM ALIVE. CAN WE GUARANTEE THAT SERGEANT?

AWOL REPORT

UNITED ARMED FORCES

Bases | Map | DROIF | SHELHL | Chiefs | MULA | Clarity | None

SHELHS PATT
DROIF ORNT
586 SIR CRU
EHOR /S/D/C
SHELHL-450
DELABS MULA
JDIF HFH
SHELHL-HATS
SHELHL-WGHT
PLUTON RENN
PLATON ADP
UNIT HOMES

12-June-2159

Synthetic Marine Unit 503, callsign SHUL, sustained a direct hit by electromagnetic mortar. Severe cranial damage, subsequent malfunction leading to AWOL status. Hacked into Dancing Star. Downloaded all highly classified DRAVN memories (extracted from Britny White last century). Left message "New Directive: Who am I?" If 503 is encountered, recommend use of deadly force.

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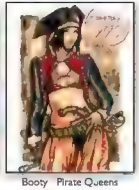

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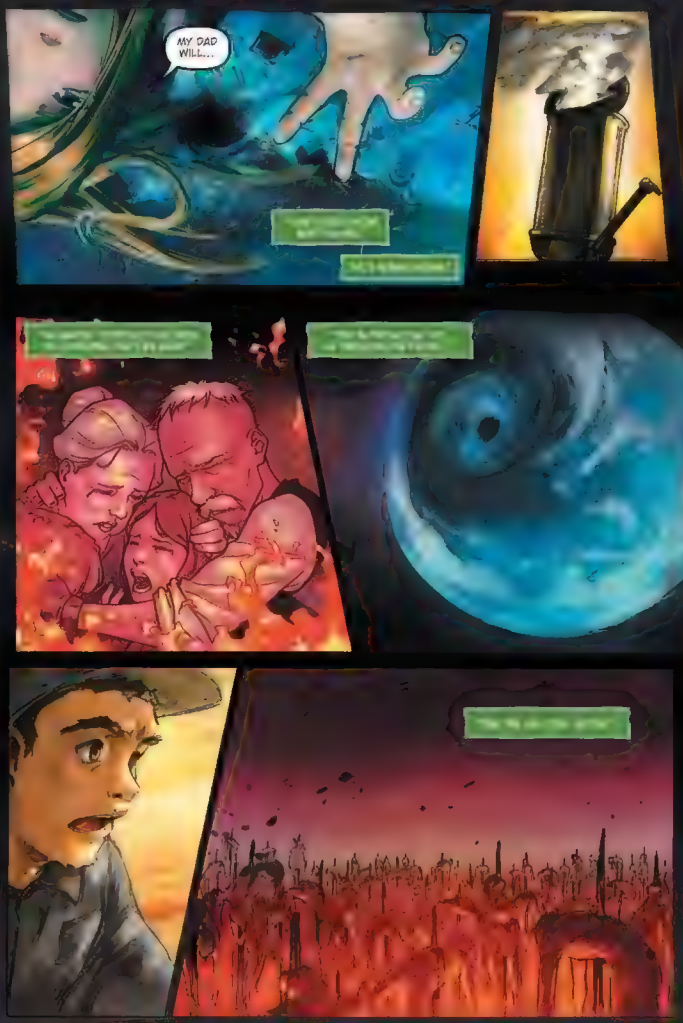
...IF I'M ABOUT TO GET HIT BY A TRAIN!!

WHAT THE...??!
I'M GOING TO DIE TODAY AND DADDY IS GOING TO CRY!
I SHOULD HAVE TOLD YOU EVERYTHING, DAD! TOGETHER WE'D HAVE MADE SENSE OF THIS...
WAIT... IT'S STOPPING!
"YOU HAVEN'T FOUND YOUR DIRECTING YET."

A BLACK HOLE IN THE TRAILER PARK! OUR HOME IS GONE.
I HAVE LEARNT SO MUCH SINCE I REALIZED WHAT WE ARE. I'VE MADE MISTAKES ALONG THE WAY, BUT GAINED SO MUCH KNOWLEDGE IN THE PROCESS.

I AM SKULL.


MY DAD WILL...

BUT THESE PEOPLE, WARRIORS, I'VE SEEN THEM IN MY VISIONS...
IF I DO THIS, WILL I SURVIVE?
ARE YOU READY?
MY FATHER ALWAYS WANTED TO TIE ME TO OUR TRAILER.
NO MORE

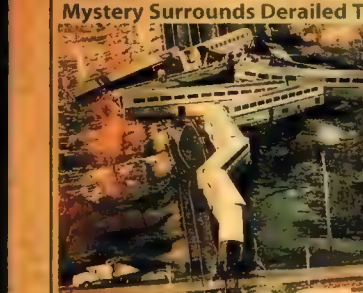
I'M BACK!
AND I'M GOING TO DIE!!

"I'LL SEE TO YOU!!"

Desert Courier

VOL. 28, NO. 2 — Your Weekly Connection to Mountain Living — 2008

Mystery Surrounds Derailed Train



The investigation into the train derailment near Bar corners has widened as authorities begin to interview local residents for clues. Sources close to the investigation report that a seventy-year-old girl was inexplicably found alive down track of the crash site, her foot trapped in the rails. The innocent but only grown stranger with the eye witness account of R.A. Peabody who related to investigators. "The whole sky went dark and then there was the deafening roar of metal crashing and tearing apart.

SH Council moves on Civic Center priority

BY JOSEPH SERNA
Staff Writer

The Sound Hill City Council made its third and crucial decisive step toward developing a new civic center at their June 3 meeting.

The council voted to keep City Hall, the Library, and the Police Department where they are, but to relocate the Fire Department to the Civic Center. The Fire Department is currently housed in a building on Sound Hill Way and 21st Street, but it would expand and relocate at both the library and police station at the Civic Center site.

The center faces both Laurel and Juniper Boulevards.

Under the weight of the debated three-percent utility tax measure and mounting demand for a police station, concept Plan A, presented by the city manager, was opposed by the city council.

How much and from where the capital for the plan will come should be determined at the June 27 council meeting.

The plan assumes the Civic Center will be used for recreational events from a fiber festival to Cinco de Mayo celebrations. Today, more than 50,000 people visit the facility and staffing needs of the police department.

Plan A establishes a new police station and library, but both are smaller and less expensive than the Blue Ribbon Committee recommended.

Cash plans set aside $10.1 million to 12,000 square foot police station on the southwest corner of the park space known as "Signal Hill." The station would also require the addition of 6,000 square feet to be developed as needed.

The proposed library, planned for the northwest corner of Signal Hill Park, was reduced to $5.5 million and 10,500 square feet, minus the community room intended meeting room, family and literacy space, and the network room.

The plan does not include the opportunity for a centralized parking area existing the proposed library, police station and existing community center.

The parking area, requiring the demolition of the basketball courts, but retaining the playground, might be used for community events like the annual Car show and Halloween carnival.

see CIVIC CENTER page 8

LB City Council certifies EIR, approves site plan concept

BY BILL PEARL
LBReport.com

The Long Beach City Council voted 5-2 Tuesday to certify an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) allowing city hall to expand the Long Beach Airport's permanent terminal area facilities to roughly double its current capacity, including 32 aircraft parking positions and a parking garage.

A motion to certify the EIR was made by 6th District Council Member Laura Richardson. The affirmative vote went 1st District Council Member Lowenthal, 5th District Council Member Kell Richardson, 7th District Council Member Reyes Uranga and 9th District Council Member Lerch. Fourth District Council Member O'Donnell and 8th District Council Member Gabelich voted against the motion and 3rd District Council Member Colonna was absent.

The council's EIR vote was followed by a 6-1 council vote to approve a conceptual site plan of 398,000 square feet. Council Members Lowenthal, Kell Richardson and Lerch voted for it and O'Donnell, Reyes Uranga and Gabelich voted against the plan.

The Council majority's decision spanned the advice of Long Beach Mayor Bob Foster, who recommended a Blueprint plan on June 1 that left some important matters were not properly addressed in the EIR as it stands. He sought to have those issues better analyzed and reviewed before the council voted to certify a document serving as the basis for airport decisions.

Five council votes were required to certify the EIR. However any one of the five actual members who voted to certify could have prompted further review by voting no.

The council's EIR certification followed council members' rejection of two motions, one by O'Donnell to continue the hearing for a minimum 60 days directing further study and a second substitute motion by Gabelich for permitting 30 days for additional analysis.

The June 20 hearing was the continuation of a June 13 hearing during which city staff was permitted to present an opening presentation after which the public presented their com-

see AIRPORT EIR page 12

Big Smiles

Blood donors were all laughs during a cavity prevention at Miller Children's Hospital.

Page 7

The Best Of Bixby Knolls

The Bixby Knolls Street Fair is this Sunday, and these Bixby Knolls will have the best

Pages 8 & 9

Natural Wonders

Trey Hedgepeth's the hearty adventure to have a treated track yard sale at "Bubba Gump."

Page 12

the lottery party

by Richard Caldwell

The Young Despondents

No, We Ain't Gonna Take It, We're Not Gonna Take It, Anymore

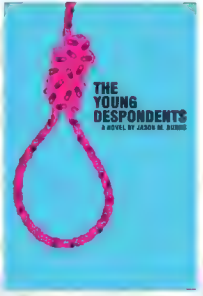
It has been said that in bleaker times, the need for escapism increases exponentially. Particularly in these dark days of our own exasperating economic disparity, the commerce of popular culture is all too ready to offer us other vistas to serve as distraction from the here and now of our collective fear and loathing towards the ongoing plight of our circumstances. Yet if you leave a pot boiling for too long, it will indeed boil over, causing a terrible mess far worse than the original contents of our intended sustenance. We can learn from our fantasy, just as we can learn from our dreams, though this obvious need to keep at least one foot grounded in reality can at times feel like an act of sado-masochism. As debilitating as survival can sometimes be, escapism as well should maintain its limits.

The debut novel from Jason M. Burns has much to say on escapism, as the maddening world he portrays easily makes victims of his characters, just as in the real world. And like with the real world, the possibility and consequences of the grandest escape - suicide - are weighed heavily by some of its players. Befriending one another in a psychiatric ward, young adults Sully, Melissa and Paul are survivors of suicide attempts gone horribly unsuccessful. After a truly shocking opening chapter, they are united by a pact with a friend more successful in his own attempt, and the trio set off on a cross country journey (with stolen dead body in tow and with alcoholic shrink hot on their trail) where they come to learn that neither life or death is in actuality as they perceived.

With insightful clarity and at times laugh out loud candidness, these characters uncover that not all victims are survivors, and that not all survivors are victims.

The previous comic book work from Burns has been warmly enough received, but this prose effort is jaw-dropping and evolutionary, being all at once poignant, hysterical, and utterly brutal. The humor of the dialogue is on par with the best of the great Peter David's prose, but infused with a generous amount of knowing social commentary. Like if *Girl, Interrupted* had instead been directed by the nihilistic horniness of Gregg Araki. The comedy is balanced well against the nightmarish backstories eased upon the reader as the story progresses, with the end result presenting a solid flow as though this book were only the latest from a painfully well published author. The fact that this is actually the first book from Burns is itself almost unbelievable, even if it apparently grew slowly from some years of trial and error. Having myself once experienced the joy of a stomach pump through my nostril, and a few hospitalizations for depression early in my own adulthood, the realism of these characters and the healthcare system that drew them together as much as it stunted their personal growth was wondrously brandished, indicative of a genuinely keen and empathic ear for detail from Burns in his research. As colorfully identifiable as any and all of the leads are, scars and all, the diverse mix of personalities they encounter roadtripping across America makes us wonder that maybe we are all broken after all, and that finding gasoline for our fuel tanks despite limited resources is what it's all ultimately about regardless. Moreso, that the tribulations themselves can be all the gas we really need on the road to adventure. And to self-acceptance. Again with the sado-masochism, but that's the Yin and Yang of life, in a nutshell.

While *The Young Despondents*, as a work of fiction, is not a fantasy tale in the TSR sense, it is written for the more intelligent gluttons of pop cultural punishment who like to know where the exit signs are. Published by Plymouth Rock Creative and currently available in a number of formats, what Jason M. Burns has accomplished in these pages is something far more honest, more meaningful, and more entertaining, than the atypical Great American Novel. And as to be expected, there's copious offerings of sex, drugs, and rock and roll (and comic books), though none in a particularly nice way. Just like life.



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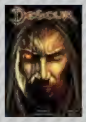

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